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July 25, 2017

NEWS RELEASE

EPFD responds to Water Recoveries

Firefighters respond to three Water Recoveries at the Rio Grande

EL PASO, Texas – Beginning at 2:34 a.m. on Tuesday July 25, the El Paso Fire Department was dispatched to the Rio Grande River near Yarbrough when U.S. Border Patrol agents spotted a person in the river and called 9-1-1. The first unit arrived on the scene at 2:42 a.m. and the Water Rescue team was immediately dispatched to retrieve the body. The team pulled out a female, approximately 14 years of age, from the water at 3:25 a.m.

Then at 7:06 a.m., the El Paso Fire Department was again dispatched to the same location when U.S. Border Patrol agents spotted a person in the river and called 9-1-1. The first unit arrived on the scene at 7:14 a.m. and the Water Rescue team was again dispatched to retrieve the body. The team pulled out a female, approximately 20 years of age, from the water at 7:42 a.m.

Then at 8:15 a.m., the El Paso Fire Department was again dispatched to the Rio Grande River near Santa Fe St. when a passerby in Mexico flagged down U.S. Border Patrol agents after spotting a person in the river and called 9-1-1. The first unit arrived on the scene at 8:19 a.m. and the Water Rescue team was again dispatched to retrieve the body. The team pulled out a male, approximately 17 years of age, from the water at 8:52 a.m.

There were no injuries to fire personnel. A total of 5 units and about 15 personnel from the El Paso Fire Department responded to each individual incident. El Paso Police, Juarez Police, Juarez Fire Department, Mexican Federal Police and the U.S. Border Patrol assisted in the three incidents.

The El Paso Fire Department would like to remind the public that the river is extremely dangerous and should be avoided. People often get swept away because they don't understand the mechanics of the water.

"It only takes six inches of fast-moving water to knock down a person," Water Rescue Captain Kristian Menendez said. "At the surface the water appears to be moving slowly, but the center of the river is the fastest moving part. Plus, there are the added dangers of debris, mud and contaminants."

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